

2003-04

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Honorable Justices:

The Battle Creek Enquirer printed an article regarding the revisions of the Michigan Supreme Court to Michigan Court Rules - one being the proposal to allow increased use of video cameras in criminal trials. It is probable that a defendant might not be present for his or her trial, thus losing the right to confront those who testify against him or her.

The right to a trial before one's peers is a citizen's right protected by the United States Constitution - Amendments - Amendment VI :

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; TO BE CONFRONTED WITH THE WITNESSES AGAINST HIM; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the Assistance of Counsel for his defense.

A revision allowing a judge to decide whether a defendant needs to be present for a trial is jeopardizing one of a citizen's basic civil rights. To leave such a vital decision in the hands of a judge may be detrimental to the defendant. Hopefully, members of the judiciary meet high standards and follow the law, however, we often read and hear about judicial violations and deals made in chambers. There have been cases of abuse of power which the public is now hearing about through the efforts of Project Innocence as their attorneys attempt to free prisoners who have been wrongly incarcerated.

THE DEFENDANT MUST RETAIN THE RIGHT TO MAKE THE CHOICE TO APPEAR IN COURT.

It remains his/her right under the US Constitution.

Thank you.

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